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Mahathir-Anwar

TO KILL FOR POLITICAL REASONS NOT MALAYSIA'S CULTURE- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today it is not Malaysia's culture to kill people because of their political leanings.

"This is not part of our country's culture. No one has been murdered because of his political stand," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when asked to comment on claims by Parti Keadilan Nasional President Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail that there had been attempts to poison her husband Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The High Court here yesterday adjourned the sodomy trial of the former Deputy Prime Minister to enable him to go for a medical check up after his defence counsel, Karpal Singh, claimed that Anwar had arsenic poisoning.

Dr Mahathir said this was the first time that someone had accused the government of trying to murder another person.

" We are surprised that it took so long for them to submit the report (Anwar's urine test report from Melbourne) to the court," the Prime Minister told a news conference at the end of his two-day visit to the Federal Territory today.

According to Azizah, Anwar's urine samples were sent to the Gribbles Pathology Laboratory in Melbourne on Aug 18 and the results were received on Aug 26.

Dr Mahathir earlier addressed the Federal Territory Barisan Nasional luncheon attended by more than 2,000 people at the Menara PGRM in Cheras near here.

Dr Mahathir said usually if a person were to suffer from poisoning he would waste no time in going to the hospital for treatment.

"But it appears that they were willing to wait for 14 days before telling about it and confirming that he has poison."

"If I suffer from poisoning today, today itself I will go to hospital, I will not wait....I will ask the hospital to clean my stomach, remove the poison and give me anti-toxin and so on," he said.

Asked about any weakness in the prison system, the Prime Minister said, "Probably it is someone's else's urine....probably he has been eating in the courthouse... in the prison all kinds of people give food as we give him extraordinary treatment and exemptions."

Dr Mahathir said no one who has been on trial had been permitted to eat in the courthouse but Anwar was allowed that and he was also allowed to speak to reporters.

Asked why Anwar was given such special treatment when other prisoners were not treated as such, the Prime Minister said, "That I do not know...probably they were afraid that the world will say we are not just...we will be pressured...you must know there are foreign reporters... and they always ask help from foreigners."

He said these people liked to discredit this country which was also their own country.

Dr Mahathir also had a meeting with the Federal Territory Umno Liaison Committee members.

"I explained to them the issues facing the party and also the economic and political matters."

He said the Federal Territory Umno was ready for the general election and had activated its election machinery.

Addressing the BN luncheon, Dr Mahathir urged leaders of all FT BN

component parties to strengthen cooperation and make use of Umno facilities if necessary to ensure a big victory for the BN.

He said all BN leaders should draw up strategies and set up campaign operations rooms and not wait until the candidates' names were announced.

"Whoever is the candidate, he is still from the BN and hence we have to give them victory," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN Chairman, was confident that BN component parties would support whichever candidate was selected for their area.

"When we select the candidate, we no longer see the face. We only see the scale -- which is the face of all BN candidates," he said.

The Prime Minister said through the efforts of the BN Government, KL was now developing by leaps and bounds and foreign tourists had described it as one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Dr Mahathir also expressed confidence that Malaysians would not support opposition pacts formed just for the purpose of the general election and to topple the BN which was set up to uplift the economic and social status of the various races in the country.

It appeared that each opposition party had its own objective and they were opposed to each but were putting up a bold front just to bring down the BN Government, he said.

"PAS wants to set up an Islamic state in Malaysia, Parti Keadilan Nasional wants to free Anwar while the DAP is championing the Malaysian Malaysia concept," Dr Mahathir said.

"These are the parties which want to copy the BN but we know the copy is of poor quality," he said.

He said the BN which would mark its 25th anniversary soon, was set up for the common good of the people of this country and not a hastily formed setup to win a general election.

Dr Mahathir said since the setting up of the BN, it had been able to gradually bring the people of various races and religions closer together and they were now happy to live and work together.

The opposition party unlike the BN was trying to divide and cause enmity among the people of various religions in this country through its speeches such as by claiming that there were more churches than mosques in Melaka.

At the function, Bandar Tun Razak Umno Division head Tamunif Mokhtar led a pledge of support for the BN leadership.

Among the dignitaries present at the function was the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

-- BERNAMA

TM AAM